

STRATEGY
RESEARCH
PROJECT

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense or any of its agencies. This document may not be released for open publication until it has been cleared by the appropriate military service or government agency.

**APPLICABILITY TO THAILAND OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS REGIONAL
FORUM SECURITY MODEL**

BY

COLONEL ANUCHAT SUKSILA
Royal Thai Army

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:
Approved for public release.
Distribution is unlimited.

DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 2



USAWC CLASS OF 1998

U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA 17013-5050

19980520 064

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**APPLICABILITY TO THAILAND OF THE ASSOCIATION OF
SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS REGIONAL FORUM SECURITY MODEL**

By

Colonel Anuchat Suksila
Royal Thai Army

Colonel (Ret) Donald W. Boose, Jr.
Project Advisor

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense or any of its agencies. This document may not be released for open publication until it has been cleared by the appropriate military service or government agency.

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:
Approved for public release.
Distribution is unlimited.

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Colonel Anuchat Suksila, Royal Thai Army

TITLE: Applicability to Thailand of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum Security Model

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 15 April 1998 PAGES: 44 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is a viable approach to multilateral dialogue and cooperation in the Southeast Asian region. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) initiatives in this area have been well recognized. In the future ARF should become a conflict resolution mechanism and institution for the whole Asia Pacific region. Thailand is an ASEAN member country that initiated the ARF. The peace and stability of the region affects the security, political, and economic situation in Thailand. This paper examines the background of ASEAN, the evolution of ARF, the implications of the ARF that affect Thailand, and the process of development of the ARF as a conflict resolution mechanism and an institution for the whole region. The paper also provides recommendations for Thailand's future foreign policy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	viii
LIST OF TABLES	x
INTRODUCTION	1
BACKGROUND	1
THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM	3
THAILAND'S SECURITY SITUATION	7
APPLICABILITY OF THE ARF MODEL	14
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	27
ENDNOTES	29
BIBLIOGRAPHY	31

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For the success of this paper, I owe a debt of gratitude to all the staff members of the US Army War College Library who have helped me in providing research materials. I also want to express my appreciation to Colonel (Ret) Donald W. Boose, Jr., Project Advisor, for his advice on writing this paper.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1

1995 Expenditure of the Ministry of Defense by Task 17

Figure 2

1995 Expenditure of the Military of Defense by Category 17

Figure 3

Comparison between National Budget and Ministry of Defense
Budget 1986-1995 19

Figure 4

Ministry of Defense Budget as a Percentage of the
National Budget..... 20

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1

Comparison between National budget and Ministry of Defense Budget 1986-1995	16
--	----

Table 2

Ministry of Defense Budget as a Percentage of GDP	21
---	----

INTRODUCTION

After the Cold War, regions and sub regions around the world are sensing a need to build institutions to strengthen themselves as they compete with each other and venture into the next century. In the Asia-Pacific region the reduced US presence, combined with conflicting claims over the South China Sea islands, were the principal factors that contributed to the development of the regional security dialogue in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).¹ The more powerful countries, China, Japan and India, have emerged as the new balance of power in the region. ASEAN has established the ASEAN Regional Security Forum (ARF) to serve as a forum for multinational dialogue on political and security issues within Asia--not just Southeast Asia. The purpose of this Strategic Research Paper is to determine whether the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) model of regional security, which is aimed more at the prevention and multilateral dialogue on security issues than on the bilateral solving of regional security problems, is applicable to the Thailand's future regional strategic security policy.

BACKGROUND

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the Bangkok Declaration by the five original Member Countries, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and

Thailand. Brunei Darussalam joined the Association on 8 January 1984. Vietnam became the seventh member of ASEAN on 28 July 1995. Laos and Myanmar also joined ASEAN on 23 July 1997.

The Bangkok Declaration united the ASEAN Member Countries in a joint effort to promote economic cooperation and the welfare of the people in the region. The Bangkok Declaration set out guidelines for ASEAN's activities and defined the aims of the organization. The ASEAN nations came together with three main objectives: to promote the economic, social, and cultural development of the region through cooperative programs; to safeguard the political and economic stability of the region against big power rivalry; and to serve as a forum for the resolution of regional differences.

Political and security cooperation in ASEAN began early in its formative years. Some of the most important accords adopted by ASEAN included the 1971 declaration designating Southeast Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN), the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), and the Declaration of ASEAN Concord in 1976. The Declaration on ZOPFAN states ASEAN's peaceful intentions and commitment to building regional resilience free from any form or manner of interference by outside powers. The TAC represents a code of international conduct governing peaceful relations among countries in the region in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations (UN). The UN General Assembly endorsed the TAC in 1992. The Declaration

of ASEAN Concord, on the other hand, contains the principles and framework for ASEAN cooperation in the political, security, economic and functional fields. One of the earliest political involvements of ASEAN was the finding of a comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodian issue.

The purpose of ASEAN is to strengthen regional cohesion and self-reliance, with special emphasis on economic, social and cultural cooperation and development. ASEAN had neither a conventional collective defense nor a collective security function. Although ASEAN was established with regional security against communism very much in mind, its founding declaration made no mention of an overt security role. Over time, however, ASEAN has assumed a distinctive, albeit limited, security role based on the medium of political dialogue. Other states in the Asia-Pacific region have also felt the need for multilateral security dialogue.

THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM

The Annual ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conferences (ASEAN-PMC) served as a forum between ASEAN and its Dialogue Partners (Australia, Canada, European Union, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea and the United States) to exchange views on political and security issues in the Asia-Pacific region. In the early 1990s, ASEAN also initiated a consultative process with China and Russia. The Fourth ASEAN Summit at Singapore in January 1992

declared that "ASEAN shall seek avenues to engage Member States in new areas of cooperation in security matters". Thus, in July 1993, ASEAN initiated the establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to serve as a multilateral consultative forum aimed at promoting preventive diplomacy and confidence-building measures among the states in the Asia-Pacific region. The Forum recently consists of the nine ASEAN Member Countries, seven Dialogue Partners (United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Korea, and the European Union), two Observers in ASEAN, (Cambodia and Papua New Guinea), and two Consultative Partners, (China and Russia). The Meeting of Senior Officials for the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF-SOM) has also been institutionalized to provide support and follow-up actions on the activities of the ARF. It recommended that ASEAN should intensify its external dialogues in political and security matters by using the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conferences (ASEAN-PMC).² At the Meeting of ASEAN and ASEAN-PMC in Singapore in 1993, an agreement was reached to establish the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to discuss a broad range of Asian Pacific security matters under the generalship of ASEAN. The main goals of ASEAN in creating ARF were: first to maintain a regional military balance through a US military presence; second to embed China, whose rapid naval expansion is a potential threat to Southeast Asia, in a multilateral forum; and third to place restraints on actions by Japan, Russia and the United States. Thus, ARF can be viewed as

the basis by which ASEAN maintains a traditional balance of power in the region.

At the first ARF in Bangkok in July 1994, in addition to six ASEAN members, several "dialogue partners" were involved: The United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Korea, and the European Union. "Observer countries" with significant economic and security interests in the region (Laos, Papua New Guinea, Vietnam, Russia, and China) were also invited. Burma was invited by the Thai government to be present and took part in sideline bilateral discussions.³ The ARF dialogue was indigenous to the region and was not dominated or controlled by the United States or another outside power. There was a perception from the meeting that the ASEAN states individually had begun to build their own defenses through force modernization. Some analysts attribute the arms purchases to a normal evolution of military modernization based on improved economies; others see the new purchases as a means to discourage Chinese aggression.⁴ The first ARF succeeded in initiating a dialogue as a means to strengthen its position and its own influence, as well as to draw the potential conflicting parties into discussions. The United States was drawn into the dialogue and modified its own policies with the publication of the March 1995 Asia-Pacific strategy by the Clinton administration. It was clear that, while the United States still focused on pressing problems in Europe and in the Middle East, Asia is of vital importance to Washington.⁵

An ARF framework of activities was adopted at the second meeting of the ARF in Brunei in August 1995. There were three main themes that could be discerned: firstly, an over-arching concern about China, its growing military power, and its South Pacific maritime claims; secondly, an ambivalence toward the United States, demonstrated by a continual desire to keep US military forces involved in the security of the region, while struggling to maintain the ARF (and ASEAN) as a Southeast Asian-controlled security mechanism; and, thirdly, a rejection of US pressure on the sensitive issue of human rights, as shown by the admission of Vietnam and the granting of formal observer status for Burma.⁶

In the third ARF meeting in Jakarta in July 1996, Myanmar (Burma) was admitted as an observer which was the mechanism to counter China's influence in Myanmar, and was a direct rebuff to US human rights concerns.⁷ In another check to Chinese maritime influence, the ARF was expanded to include India, a modernizing Chinese rival for power.⁸ Pressure from other countries to join the ARF, such as Great Britain, France, North Korea, and landlocked states like Mongolia and the four central Asian republics caused ARF members to adopt formal criteria for membership.⁹

In order to assist the Chairman of the ARF-SOM to consider and make recommendations to the ARF on the implementation of

several proposed cooperation activities, an Inter-session Support Group (ISG) on confidence building is now convened at the intergovernmental level. Inter-session Meetings (ISM) on some cooperative activities are also held.

At the intra-ASEAN level, ASEAN has initiated the convening of the Special Meeting of ASEAN Senior Officials, (Special SOM), which consists of both foreign ministry and defense officials of ASEAN Member Countries. The Special SOM discusses ongoing and other possible areas of cooperation which include, among others, confidence-building measures, security cooperation programs, promotion of ASEAN security concepts, emergency relief cooperation, and coordination of ASEAN's position on security-related international instruments. Meanwhile, bilateral security and political cooperation among ASEAN states and between individual ASEAN and non-ASEAN states continue in various forms and at different levels.

THAILAND'S SECURITY SITUATION

Thailand is the only Southeast Asian country never to have been colonized and today it is perhaps one of the most progressive of the states in the region. It has a larger market-oriented economy and a pro-Western political ethos, together with a fair degree of consensus on the value of this chosen course. Its strategic location in Southeast Asia has given it the attention and support of a variety of countries over the years

and it has successfully balanced itself between the competing demands it faces. Thailand today is governed by an elected political system, which has had successive peaceful elections since a brief military government ruled in the early 1990s. Military influence is still great in both politics and economics, however.

Thailand is unlikely to face any serious external threat to its sovereignty in the coming decade. Lacking either domestic or foreign immediate security threats, Bangkok's attention has been drawn to regional issues. The most significant external threats to continued stability in Thailand would be regional conflict (such as over sovereignty issues in the South China Sea) or regional hegemony problems (such as far-reaching Chinese or Indian expansionism). A limited threat is posed by infiltration of Muslim separatist groups operating mainly along the Thai/Malaysian border. The most active of the groups is the Al Argam Revivalist Sect, which was banned by the government in 1994. Muslim secessionist movements like the Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO) and the National Revolution Movement (BRN), which has been active in the southern provinces, have been largely contained by strengthened government security forces. They are still capable of isolated bombing and shooting incidents, however. With latent threats to security along many of Thailand's land borders, but with the nation free of internal instability, the Thai armed forces look primarily to ensuring

security from ethnic insurgencies in Myanmar (Burma) and the threat of over spill from antigovernment elements in Laos and Cambodia. Thailand's armed forces are moving from their previous concentration on internal stability to a more conventional national defense posture. The country's rapid economic development has made possible the purchase of a number of modern weapons systems.

Thailand has become one of the world's fastest growing economies, with annual growth rates of over 8 per cent. This rapid growth has brought with it the problems of rampant urbanization, economic disparities between population segments, and environmental degradation. Nevertheless, Thailand's economic and political development in recent years is one of the region's greatest success stories. Thailand is also playing an active role in the economic development of the three Indochina countries and Myanmar.

Thailand does not suffer from fractious minority groups or class divisions that could threaten national stability. Despite a history of coalition governments and military coups, such unsettling events normally reflect bids for personal power rather than political ideology and they generally allow business to continue as usual. The booming economy could exacerbate the continuing inequality between rich and poor and the urban and rural elements of society. The most obvious potential problem centers on the politic instability which could result from

problems with the succession upon the eventual death of the King. Political terrorism remains a security concern, although terrorist activities are fairly uncommon.

From 1782 an absolutist dynasty ruled Siam, as the nation was then called. In 1896 an Anglo-French agreement recognized the country as an independent buffer state between the British-influenced Malaya and Singapore and the French-influenced Cambodia and Laos. During the Second World War, Thailand was forced into collaboration with Japan. As a result, it sought US friendship and protection immediately after the war had ended. The relationship was to benefit Thailand greatly in the form of financial and military aid in the subsequent years. Since World War II, the United States and Thailand have developed close relations as reflected in several bilateral treaties and by both countries' participation in UN multilateral activities and agreements. The principal bilateral arrangement is the 1966 Treaty of Amity and Economic Relations, which facilitates Thai companies' economic access to the US. Other important agreements address civil use of atomic energy, sales of agricultural commodities, investment guarantees, and military and economic assistance. The United States and Thailand are among the signatories of the 1954 Manila pact of the former South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). Article IV (1) of this treaty provides that, in the event of armed attack in the treaty area (which includes Thailand), each member would "act to meet the

common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes."

Despite the dissolution of SEATO in 1977, the Manila pact remains in force and, together with the Thanat-Rusk communique of 1962, constitutes the basis of US security commitments to Thailand. Thailand continues to be a key security ally in Asia, along with Australia, Japan, and South Korea. Thailand's stability and independence are important to the maintenance of peace in the region. Economic assistance has been extended in various fields, including rural development, health, family planning, education, and science and technology. However, the bilateral aid program is now being phased out, as Thailand becomes more developed.

Thailand regards itself as an important regional power and works to increase its commensurate political, economic and military influence throughout Southeast Asia. Political interests are primarily pursued at the bilateral level, although relationships with its fellow members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are perhaps most important. Thailand is the founding member of ASEAN and committed to expanding ASEAN's reach from its traditional social and economic interests to a more effective regional security organization. Thailand hosted the 1995 ASEAN heads of state and ministerial conferences during which Vietnam joined ASEAN, expanding the Association's memberships to seven states. Thailand continues to pursue a policy of 'constructive engagement' with Myanmar officials with the support of its ASEAN partners. The

relationship with China has cooled but remains important. Thai Defense Minister Chavalit Yongchayuth made an important visit to Beijing during 1996, during which he reportedly obtained assurances that the Chinese would make no more arms sales to Myanmar. Yangon's China-supported arms build-up during the past seven years has been a concern of Thailand as well as other Southeast and South Asian countries.

The most important factor in creating prosperity for the nation is the establishment of the national security, which will create a good life for the people by integrating all national power in order to develop the country to be prosperous and stable. This is to put into deeds the saying of His Majesty, King Phumibol Adulyadej, that "A secure Nation makes a prosperous people". In order to achieve this aim, Thailand must formulate a strategy, while taking into consideration its national interests, national objectives and government policy.

Thailand considers the following as its basic national interests: firstly, the maintenance of the state with independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity; secondly, the happiness and well being of the people; thirdly, the growth and advancement of the nation as a whole, both in economic and social terms, through the existence of an administrative system that benefits the people; and lastly, honor and prestige in the international community.

To achieve those national interests, national objectives are

formulated to act as guidelines as follows: firstly, to maintain independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity; secondly, to maintain a democratic system and the institution of the Monarchy; thirdly, to maintain religion and Thai culture; fourthly, assure the lasting security, happiness, and well-being of the people; and lastly, to develop national power for security and to be comparable to other civilized nations.

After the cold war, confrontation between the Free World and Communism ceased, but other problems concerning race, religion, minorities, demarcation of borders, and social matters emerged instead. Security problems during this present time are more complicated than before and could escalate in a very short time. Therefore, plans must be made that are flexible and timely in execution, and that cover every aspect of problems that have become more diverse. It is certain that Thailand will face problems in the future concerning unclear borders, which become vulnerable because some areas have not been demarcated and there are no efficient monitoring systems to prevent infiltration by a potential threat. Conflicting sea boundaries and competing claims on territory (both land and sea) are also future problems affecting national security. Internal changes in neighboring countries could also affect Thailand's security. These changes include the rise to power of certain political leaders, a change in administration or leaders, and changes in the economic system. Therefore, Thailand's future national strategy must take into

consideration these changes. The internal problems of neighboring countries that directly affect the security of Thailand include illegal entry, cross-border smuggling, illegal trade in weapons, and drugs. All these activities will affect the well being of the Thai people and will inevitably affect the stability of the government and the security of the nation. Thailand's internal problems are also important factors that must be considered, since they could escalate and affect national security. These problems include those concerning economics, distribution of resources, poverty, distribution of income, land and the price of agricultural commodities. These problems could affect national security, or at the very least, the stability of the government.

APPLICABILITY OF THE ARF MODEL

Thailand is in the Southeast Asia sub-region, which is experiencing an unprecedented period of peace and prosperity. For the first time in a century or more, the guns are virtually silent. There is a growing trend among the states in the sub-region to enhance dialogue on political and security cooperation. Southeast Asia is also one of the dynamic sub-regions of the world in terms of economic growth. The main challenge of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is to sustain and enhance this peace and prosperity. This is not an easy challenge. The sub-region has experienced some of the most disastrous wars of the twentieth century. Its various countries differ significantly in levels of

development. There are cultural, ethnic, religious, and historical differences to overcome. Habits of cooperation are not deep-seated in some parts of the region. ASEAN has a pivotal role to play in the ARF. It has a demonstrable record of enhancing regional cooperation in the most diverse sub-region of the Asia-Pacific. It has also fostered habits of cooperation and provided the catalyst for encouraging regional cooperation in the wider Asia-Pacific region. The annual ASEAN Ministerial Meetings have contributed significantly to the positive regional environment today. There would be great hope for the Asia-Pacific if the whole region could emulate ASEAN's record of enhancing the peace and prosperity of its participants. Although ASEAN has undertaken the obligation to be the primary driving force of the ARF, a successful ARF requires the active participation and cooperation of all participants. ASEAN must always be sensitive to take into account the interests and concerns of all ARF participants.

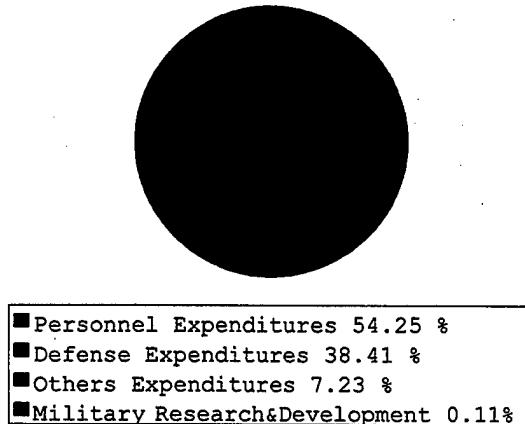
Table 1 Comparison between National budget and Ministry of Defense budget 1986-1995

Fiscal Year	National Budget (Million Baht)	Increase %	M o D Budget (Million Baht)	Increase %	% National Budget
1986	218000.00	2.35	39,266.220	-0.28	18.01
1987	227500.00	4.36	39,165.222	-0.26	17.22
1988	243500.00	7.03	41,150.309	5.87	16.9
1989	285500.00	17.25	44,427.228	7.86	15.56
1990	335000.00	17.33	52,634.635	18.47	15.09
1991	387500.00	15.67	60,575.222	15.09	15.63
1992	460400.00	18.81	69,272.982	14.36	15.05
1993	460000.00	21.63	78,625.342	13.50	14.04
1994	625000.00	11.61	85,423.917	8.65	13.67
1995	715000.00	14.4	91,638.768	7.28	12.82

The use of military force in resolving international conflicts normally results in heavy loss of life and property and great damage to the national economy. After the end of the Cold War, Thailand, which used to receive assistance for its national defense, had to depend on itself to establish a defense system that was appropriate for the situation. Since it is necessary to become self-reliant in protecting the national interest, the Armed Forces must develop adequate capabilities to perform this task. The best way of doing this is to change from quantity to quality; that is, reduce the number of personnel and procure modern equipment to offset this manpower reduction and to replace obsolete equipment. However, because of budget limitations, the Thai government has to consider every aspect with great care so

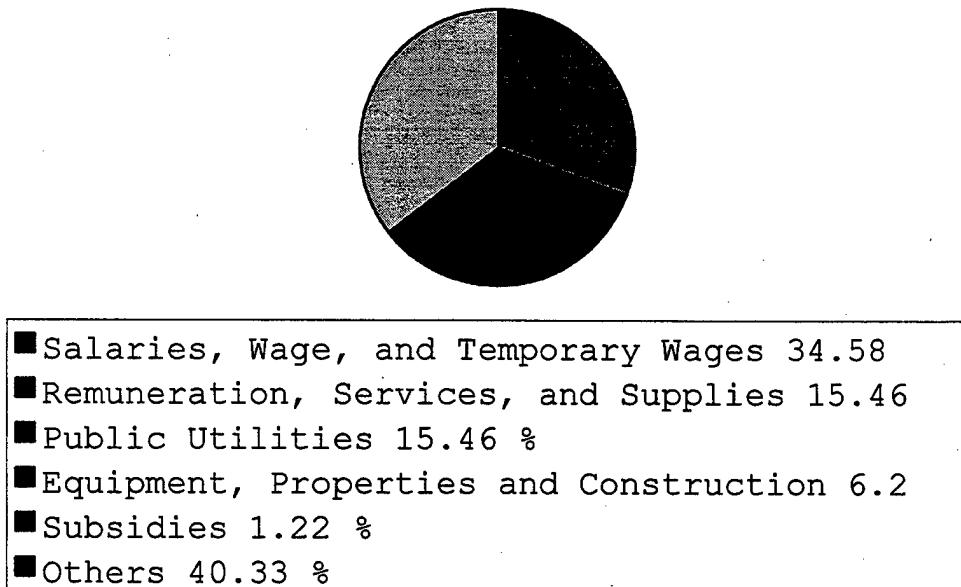
as to achieve maximum efficiency. Consequently, most of the Ministry of Defense budget used for upkeep of personnel and only a limited amount left for the development of weapons and equipment (as shown in figure 1, 2).

Figure 1 1995 Expenditure of the Ministry of Defence by Task



Source: Budget Division, Office of the Defence Budget

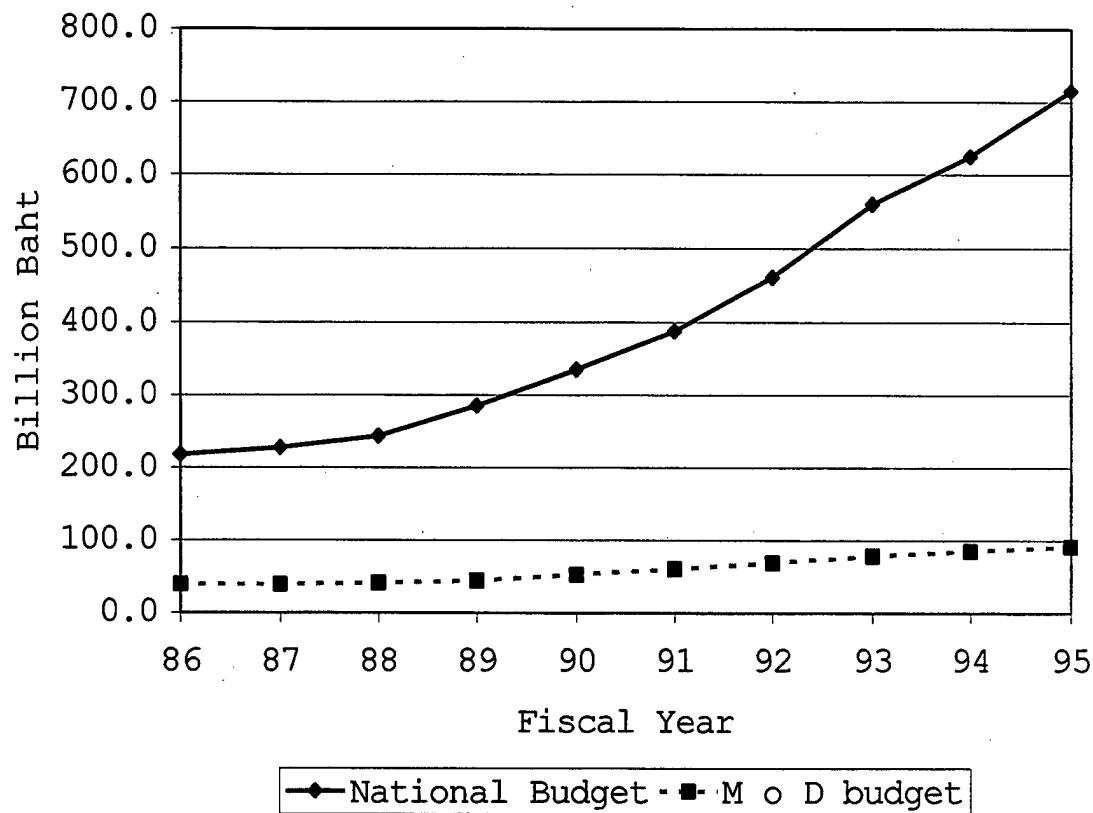
Figure 2 1995 Expenditure of the Military of Defense by Category



Source: Budget Division, Office of the Defence Budget

Even though the amount of the Ministry of Defence budget has increased since 1986 (figure 3), as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has decreased continually (figure 4). Table 2 shows the Ministry of Defense budget, the GDP, and the M o D budget as the percentage of GDP for the period 1986-1995. If both the necessity of developing the Armed Forces and the current security situation in the region are considered, then the Ministry of Defense budget should not fall below 2% of the GDP.

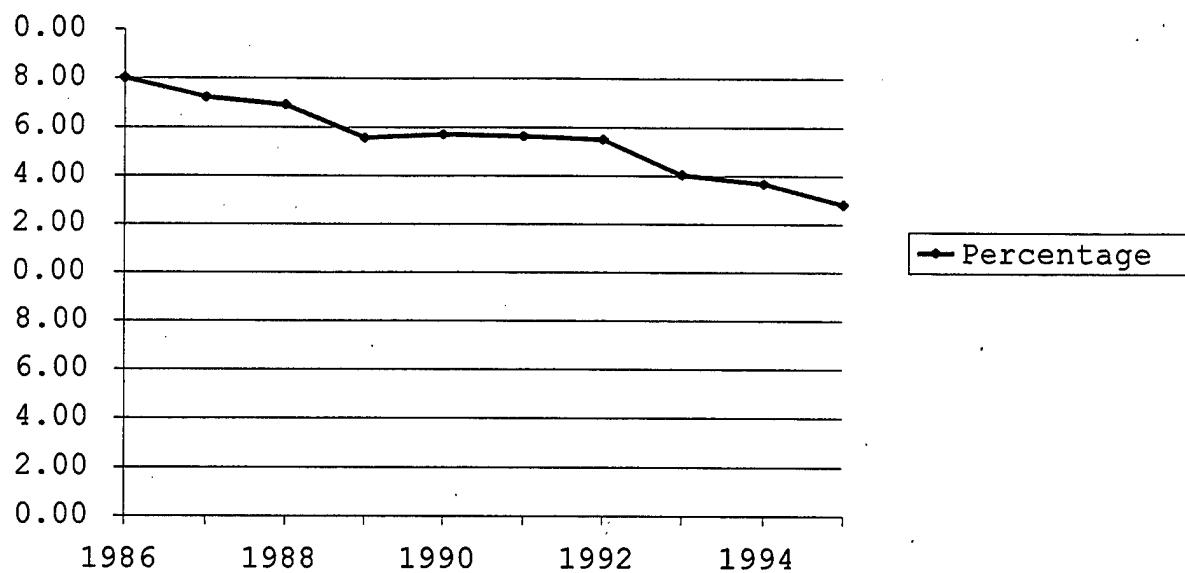
Figure 3 Comparison between National Budget and Ministry of Defense Budget 1986-1995



Fiscal Year	National Budget (Million Baht)	M o D Budget (Million Baht)
1986	218.0	39.3
1987	227.5	39.2
1988	243.5	41.2
1989	285.5	44.4
1990	335.0	52.6
1991	387.5	60.6
1992	460.4	69.3
1993	560.0	78.6
1994	625.0	85.4
1995	715.0	91.6

Source: Budget Division, Office of the Defense Budget

Figure 4 Ministry of Defence Budget as a Percentage of the National Budget



Fiscal Year	National Budget (Billion Baht)	M o D Budget (Billion Baht)
1986	218.0	39.3
1987	227.5	39.2
1988	243.5	41.2
1989	285.5	44.4
1990	335.0	52.6
1991	387.5	60.6
1992	460.4	69.3
1993	560.0	78.6
1994	625.0	85.4
1995	715.0	91.6

Source: Budget Division, Office of the Defence Budget

Table 2 Ministry of Defence Budget as a Percentage of GDP

Fiscal year	M o D Budget (Million Baht)	GDP (Million Baht)	M o D Budget as % of GDP
1986	39.27	1,133.397	3.46
1987	39.17	1,299.913	3.01
1988	41.15	1,559.804	2.64
1989	44.43	1,856.992	2.39
1990	52.63	2,191.094	2.40
1991	60.58	2,519.618	2.40
1992	69.27	2,833.277	2.44
1993	78.42	3,161.374	2.48
1994	85.42	3,585.000	2.38
1995	91.64	4,060.000	2.26

Source: The Military Balance, 1994-95

In order to avoid high defense expenditure, therefore, the creating of understanding and the conflict resolution between countries through negotiation as part of preventive measures is of the greatest importance because good understanding will create long lasting friendship. The government of Thailand firmly believes in non-aggression and has always acted on the principle of justice and fairness in accordance with international standards and international law in solving bilateral problems. Negotiations under the framework of an international organization are an efficient way of solving disputes. The ASEAN regional Forum (ARF) is another initiative for creating a forum to increase security in the region. It is aimed more at preventing problems than at solving them, and was not established to oppose any one country in the region. The countries outside ASEAN are

invited to attend as dialogue partners or observers. It is another step forward in the creation of good relations and understanding, which in turn effectively prevent and reduce conflicts. Cooperation is the basis for the creation of peace, which can be achieved through the linking of human resources, society, economics and economic infrastructure. The ARF meeting is a way of bringing together all the countries in the region, some of which who may be in conflict, to meet and conduct dialogue on contentious issues to achieve for mutual understanding. It is not effective in solving all the problems, but it is a way that can be improved so as to be more effective in the future. Thailand was a founding country in forming the ARF, which gives Thailand some benefits in solving its border problems with neighboring countries and also in playing a positive role in the South China Sea conflict that affects the security and economics of every country in the region.

To make the ARF work, three prerequisites need to be fulfilled. First, acceptance of ASEAN's ideas on security of the region as the principles of regional order in the Asia Pacific region, without hegemony from any major power participating in the ARF and without any single country imposing its views on the others. This will provide assurance that the vital interests of every member will be considered and accommodated in the process of deliberations and decisions. TAC's ideals and principles as the basis for a regional conduct have become a reality and have

to be adjusted for implementation. The concept of CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe) has been rejected and considered not applicable to the diverse Asia Pacific region.

Second, to complement the ASEAN step-by-step approach with some concrete proposals for cooperation, after putting the process in motion and establishing trust, confidence and solidarity among its members. These two approaches must be promoted simultaneously. Concrete proposals for cooperation should be accepted by ASEAN only if there is consensus among the participants and when all ASEAN members are ready and capable of fully participating in the activities.

Third, encouraging participation of the second-track (TRACK II) as a means to sustain ASEAN competitiveness. A second-track effort to test new ideas and to work them out before they are discussed and accepted in the ARF is vital to the process. There should be some co-ordination and a lot of cooperation between the first-track (the official track) and the second-track (the non-official track, but with officials participating in a private capacity). The second-track can assist and support the ARF with its studies and networking, as well as through the political support that can be developed in each of its member countries.

To successfully preserve and enhance the peace and prosperity of the region, the ARF must dispassionately analyze the key challenges facing the region. Firstly, it should

acknowledge that periods of rapid economic growth are often accompanied by significant shifts in power relations that can lead to conflict. The members of the ARF will have to carefully manage these transitions to preserve the peace. Secondly, the region is remarkably diverse. The ARF should recognize and accept the differing approaches to peace and security and try to forge a consensual approach to security issues. Thirdly, the region has unresolved territorial and other differences. Any one of these could spark a conflagration that could undermine the peace and prosperity of the region. It would be unwise for a young and fragile organization like the ARF to tackle all these challenges simultaneously. Over time, the ARF will have to gradually defuse these potential problems.

In fulfilling its objective as a regional multilateral mechanism for political-security dialogue in the Asia-Pacific region, the ARF should take as its main tasks preventive diplomacy, confidence-building measures, and non-proliferation and arms control. All these have to be pursued gradually, in accordance with ASEAN capabilities to participate fully, and on the basis of consensus of all the participants. At the same time, the ARF should serve as a mechanism for strengthening the UN's collective security capabilities in the region as well.

The term preventive diplomacy embraces a variety of strategies to resolve - or, at least, to contain - disputes, through peaceful, non-military, methods, such as negotiations,

inquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement or other non-coercive measures stipulated in Article 33 of the UN Charter. Other actors in the region have to recognize the ASEAN way of solving or controlling bilateral problems among themselves as a form of preventive diplomacy. Some regional security issues have been successfully resolved by strengthening overall bilateral relations, including relations in the security field, as recently demonstrated between the Philippines and Malaysia. Other problems, such as joint operations and exploitation, were settled through specific bilateral talks. The High Council of the 1970's Treaty of Amity and Co-operation (TAC), the instrument of last resort in case of disputes among ASEAN countries, which was endorsed by the UN in January 1992, has never been invoked until now because other ways are available and have proven relatively effective. The ARF should support the second-track initiatives and take up some of their suggestions for discussion at the official level in the future. In fact, this has already been done with regard to joint resource exploitation and exploration in the Spratlys, especially for the purpose of enlisting China's participation. The pattern of regular exchanges of high-level visits among ASEAN countries has effectively developed into a preventive diplomacy channel. It emphasizes the need to develop trust and confidence among neighboring states.

In promoting confidence-building measures, the ARF must

adopt two complementary approaches. The first approach derives from ASEAN's experience, which provides a valuable and proven guide for the ARF. ASEAN has succeeded in reducing tensions among its member states, promoting region cooperation and creating a regional climate conducive to peace and prosperity without the implementation of explicit confidence-building measures, achieving conditions approximating those envisaged in the Declaration of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN). The concepts of ZOPFAN and its essential component, the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone (SEANFWZ), are significantly contributing to regional peace and stability.

The second approach is the implementation of concrete confidence-building measures. The ARF processes along two tracks. Governments will carry out Track One activities. Strategic institutes and non-government organizations in the region, such as ASEAN-ISIS and CSCAP will carry out Track Two activities. ARF thus becomes a meaningful vehicle to enhance the peace and prosperity of the region. It is a relevant instrument that can be used in the event that a crisis or problem emerges. Without a high degree of confidence among ARF participants, it is unlikely that they will agree to the establishment of mechanisms that are perceived to be intrusive and/or autonomous. However, a good start was made with the three workshops organized by International Studies Center (Thailand) and Institute of Policy Studies (Singapore) on ASEAN-UN Cooperation for Peace and

Preventive Diplomacy, and the Indonesia-sponsored series of workshops on the South China Sea.

The first effort was the creation of a strategic environment that promotes trust, confidence and the willingness for dialogue. This is what ASEAN has achieved in Southeast Asia and it should also be gradually established in the ARF. The measures and activities that may help such intentions to materialize are:

Strengthening international instruments for nonproliferation, such as: the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT; the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC); the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC); UN Register on Conventional Arms, and the Missile Technology Control (MTC). Regional or sub-regional mechanisms based on international instruments could also be established. These could include special verification provisions, enhancing transparency on a regional basis, or CBMs. In addition, they could also include the creation of a regional supplement to the UN Register in the case of conventional armaments, such as existing equipment holdings and domestic production.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The ARF has been the only viable effort for multilateral dialogue and co-operation in the region. ASEAN initiatives in this effort are well recognized. In the future, ARF should become a conflict resolution mechanism and institution for the whole

region. This can only be achieved after all the specific aspects of co-operation mentioned above have moved to a substantial level. If they are, then under the aegis of the ARF real achievements can be accomplished. The result of the success of these endeavors will be a future Asia-Pacific region that can stay peaceful, stable and dynamic as it has been throughout the past decades. Toward that end, it is critical that we set out on the right path and proceed at an appropriate, comfortable pace.

The recommendations for Thailand's foreign policy in support of ARF are as follows:

First, Thailand should employ ASEAN as the primary vehicle for peace and cooperation in the Southeast Asian region in order to achieve a region of greater peace, security, and stability and to serve as a basis for economic and social development and cooperation among the countries of the region.

Second, Thailand should conduct a policy of preventive diplomacy by supporting the process of developing the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) into an effective mechanism for strengthening regional security.

Third, Thailand should resolve outstanding bilateral issues between Thailand and countries in the Southeast Asian region, i.e., land and maritime boundary disputes and issues involving minority groups, illegal labor, fisheries, deforestation, the environment, international crime, and so forth, to ensure continued peace and security in the region.

Word Count-5243

ENDNOTES

¹ P. Lewis Young, "With Declining US Presence, ASEAN Banks on Interdependence", Armed Forces Journal, Vol. 130, No 8, (March 1993), pp. 25-26.

² "Singapore Declaration of 1992", ASEAN Heads of Government Meeting, Singapore, 27-28 January 1992, p. 2.

³ FBIS-EAS-94-144, July 27, 1994, pp. 3-5, on various national positions with respect to Burma's participation and the human rights situation in Burma.

⁴ Barbara Opall, "Modernization Effort Fuels Pacific Arms Buys," Defense News, October 24-30, 1994, pp. 10, 22.

⁵ Department of Defense, Office of International Security Affairs, "United States Singapore Declaration of 1992", ASEAN Heads of Government Meeting, Singapore, 27-28 January 1992, p. 2.

⁶ Speech by Dr. Tony Tan Keng Yam, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of Singapore, at the Third Asia-Pacific Defense Conference, February 6, 1996.

⁷ International Herald Tribune, July 20-21, 1996, pp. 1, 5.

⁸ The Straits Times, July 20, 1996, p. 3;

⁹ Viet Nam News, July 20, 1996, pp. 1, 6.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

Paul Dibb. Adelphi Paper 295: Towards a New Balance of Power in Asia, Oxford University Press, May 1995.

Smith, Dianne L. Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, Asean security to the Year 2000, December 15, 1996.

Wortzel, Larry M. Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, The ASEAN Regional Forum: Asian Security without an American Umbrella, December 13, 1996.

PERIODICAL ARTICLES

Australia Foreign Affairs and Trade Record, Volume 1, Number 1, December 1997.

Boweles, Paul. "ASEAN, AFTA and the 'New Regionalism'", Pacific Affairs, p. 219, Vol. 70, No 2, Summer 1997.

FBIS-EAS-94-144, July 27, 1994.

Foreign Policy Bulletin, Volume 8/ Number 5, September/ October 1997.

International Herald Tribune, July 20-21, 1996.

"Singapore Declaration of 1992", ASEAN Heads of Government Meeting, Singapore, 27-28 January 1992.

Speech by Dr. Tony Tan Keng Yam, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of Singapore, at the Third Asia-Pacific Defense Conference, February 6, 1996.

The Straits Times, July 20, 1996.

Viet Nam News, July 20, 1996.

PUBLIC DOCUMENTS

The White House, A National Security Strategy for a New Century, May 1997.

MILITARY PUBLICATIONS

Department of Defense, Office of International Security Affairs, "United States Singapore Declaration of 1992", ASEAN Heads of

Government Meeting, Singapore, 27-28 January 1992.

Opall, Barbara. "Modernization Effort Fuels Pacific Arms Buys".
Defense News, October 24-30, 1994.

Strategic Research Institute National, Institute of Defence Studies,
Supreme Command Headquarters, Ministry of Defence, The
Defence of Thailand 1996, Aroon Khan Phim, Bangkok,
Thailand, (March 1996).

Young, P. Lewis. "With Declining US Presence, ASEAN Banks on
Interdependence". Armed Forces Journal, Vol. 130, No 8,
(March 1993).